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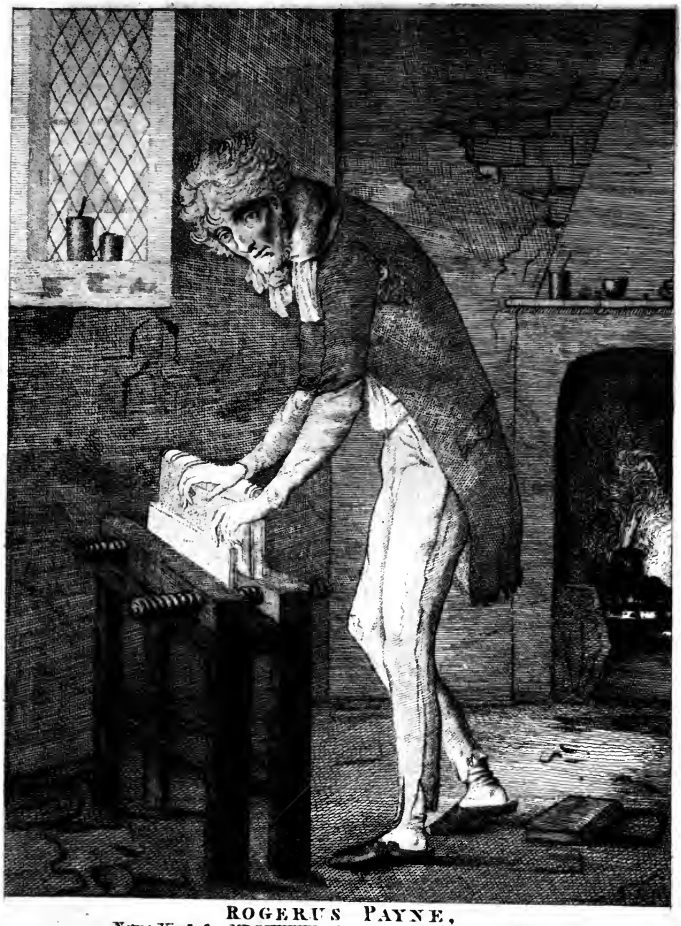

ROGER PAYNE IN HIS WORKSHOP.

ROGER PAYNE

AND HIS ART

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND WORK AS A BINDER

BY

WILLIAM LORING ANDREWS

NEW-YORK
PRINTED AT THE DE VINNE PRESS
1892

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P34A5

INSCRIBED, IN RECOGNITION
OF HIS PREËMINENCE
IN THE ART OF
BOOKBINDING
IN AMERICA,
TO

WILLIAM MATTHEWS.

M529834

"A well bound book is neither of one type, nor finished so that its highest praise is that 'had it been made by a machine it could not have been made better.' It is individual; it is instinct with the hand of him who made it; it is pleasant to feel, to handle, and to use; it is the original work of an original mind working in freedom simultaneously with hand and heart and brain to produce a thing of use, which all time shall agree ever more and more also to call 'a thing of beauty.'"

J. Cobden-Sanderson.

PREFATORY NOTE.

NO more striking evidence can be seen of the influence the Grolier Club is exerting upon its members, and to some extent upon book-lovers outside of its borders, than in the change that has taken place in the style and methods of book-collecting. In former times, it was sufficient for the collector to possess any copy—not the copy of a particular edition. Condition was not insisted upon so long as possession was attained. This can easily be verified by any one who will take the trouble to look through any large general library formed thirty or forty years ago. It will be at once apparent that the niceties of clean copies, uncut edges, fine and appropriate bindings, were not thought of, and that while here and there might be found a treasure from some of the old-time printers and binders, yet after all it was but a

chance acquisition and not there as the result of a carefully thought out plan. All this is changing. The collector of the present day is, from the force of circumstances, if for no higher and better reason, compelled to become more and more of a specialist. Each one must confine himself to the period or particular department of literature that appeals most strongly to his taste or fancy, and then strive to make his collection in all respects as complete as possible.

It is this among other valuable lessons that the Grolier Club has taught its members by its exhibitions, lectures, and publications. This predominating influence has been felt even by our older and better-known collectors.

The present sketch of Roger Payne, which it is a pleasure as well as an honor to introduce to those who are the fortunate possessors of the limited number issued, owes its origin largely to the fact above stated.

The author, having become possessed of a few characteristic specimens of Roger Payne's work, was led to study his effects and methods, and in the end became a noted collector as well as the en-

thusiastic admirer his monograph shows him to be. The following essay is the result of careful study and minute examination of all that could be discovered regarding Roger Payne's life and work, and the opinion may safely be advanced that it contains all that is known of that singular, erratic, but withal artistic character. For those who are not fortunate enough to own the original print of Roger Payne at work in his garret—showing him a "thing of rags and tatters," indeed, and very touching in its pathos—the frontispiece will possess great interest. The plates of bindings have been most successfully reproduced from the books themselves by Mr. Edward Bierstadt, who has employed his well-known artotype process to give an exact facsimile in gold and colors of the volumes as they are. As far as known, this is the first attempt in this country to reproduce bindings in color by this process; and it must be conceded that they preserve more closely the characteristics of the books themselves than many of the more highly wrought but idealized plates of bindings that are so common nowadays.

With these "forewords," this booklet is left to

the "courteous reader," with merely a pause to say that if he derives one half the amount of pleasure in reading that the author had in writing, there will be pleasure enough and to spare.

BEVERLY CHEW.

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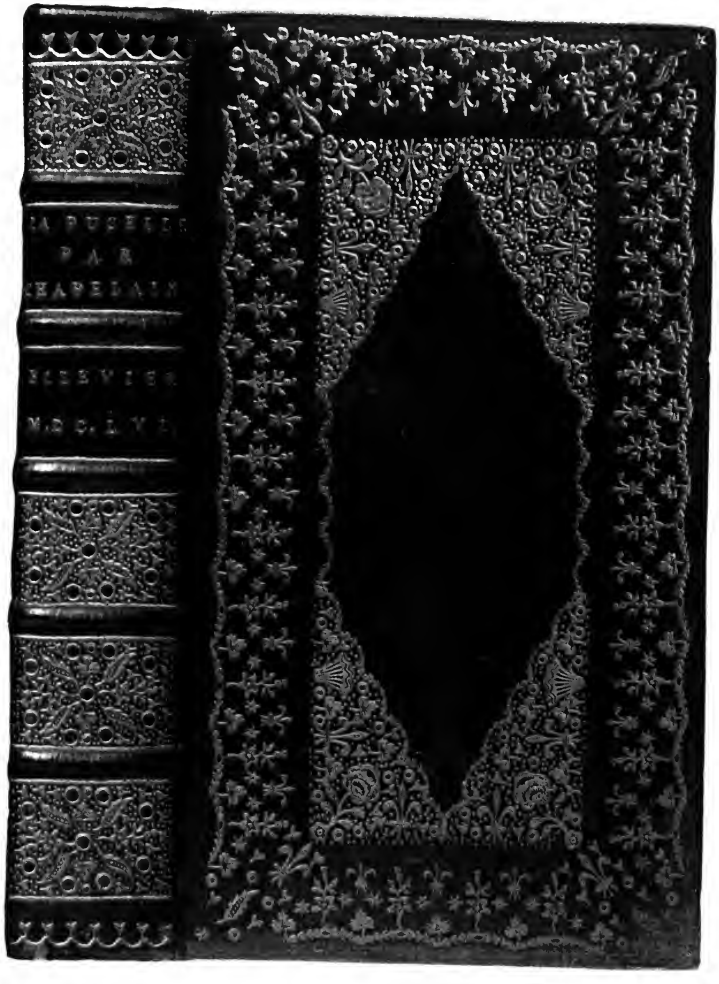


LA PUCELLE.

M. CHAPELAIN, PARIS, 1656.

ROGER PAYNE AND HIS ART.

THE story of the life of Roger Payne, the most noted English binder of the eighteenth century, is unfortunately the common one of many men of genius. It is the history of a man generously endowed by nature with the inventive faculty of mind, and possessed of a high degree of manual skill in his handicraft, but of an entirely thriftless disposition and most irregular habits of life. The picture presented is one of days and nights devoted to patient, painstaking labor amidst surroundings of wretchedness and squalor, succeeded by long periods of idleness and dissipation, the scene closing, when he was hardly past the prime of life, with a lonely

death in a comfortless garret in Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane.

It is nevertheless the history of a man who, notwithstanding these serious hindrances to his success, stands foremost in the ranks of English bookbinders — the founder of a purely English style of decoration for the covers of books, one which has received for nearly a century since he died that sincerest form of admiration and approval shown by imitation. From the few examples of binding distinctively English in character that existed in the middle of the eighteenth century, he formed by the force of his taste and genius a style of ornamentation of his own, which for beauty and simplicity of design and true artistic feeling in execution has yet to be equaled by any other binder of the English school.

Roger Payne was born in Windsor Forest, in the year 1739, and first found employment with Pote, a noted bookseller at Eton; thence he migrated to London, and entered the service of Thomas Osborne, a dealer in book rarities in Gray's Inn. This

connection proved a very transient one, and he is next found established in business for himself by the kindness and benevolence of a namesake, Thomas Payne, whose shop at the Mews Gate was for half a century (1740 to 1790) a much-frequented resort of the learned men, authors, and book-collectors, "the Farmers, Cracherodes, Roxburghes, and Spencers of the day." He remained the friend and benefactor of Roger through life, notwithstanding the trials to which his patience was subjected by the dissolute and irregular habits of the man he was constantly befriending. The frontispiece, which is a veritable portrait of Roger Payne in his dilapidated and scantily furnished work-room, is copied from an engraving which, as the inscription shows, was made at the expense of Thomas Payne.[1] Here he executed his

[1] Thomas Payne, "Honest Tom Payne." He commenced his career in Round Court in the Strand opposite York buildings, where he was an assistant to his elder brother, Oliver Payne, with whom originated (it is said) the idea and practice of printing catalogues — his first (T. P.) catalogue is dated July 29, 1740. His little shop [in the shape of an L] was the first that obtained the name of a literary coffee-house in London, from the knot of literati that resorted to it.—Dibdin's *Decameron*.

many beautiful bindings, often obliged by his necessities to make for himself out of iron the tools which he required.

The materials used by Roger Payne as coverings for his bindings were almost without exception either straight-grained morocco or russia leather, the first as notable for its durability as the latter is for the lack of that quality.[1] His decided preference was for a straight-grained morocco of a bright red color, which supplied him with a rich background for gold tooling; on this he placed an ornament, generally simple in character, but always, as he informs us in his voluminous bills, intended to be appropriate to and in harmony with the character of the book it covered. In using a border of antique shields and crescents, he tells us he adopted them as ornaments because they were in the head-piece of the preface of the book, and therefore he considered them suitable. On the doublure of a binding on a

1 Russia leather is one of the most undesirable materials that can be used for a binding. In a very short space of time it loses its life and becomes hard and brittle, breaking away at the joints; it also fades in color more quickly than any other kind of leather.

TITI LIVII HISTORIARUM LIBRI.

ELZEVIR, 1634.

vellum copy of the "Aldine Anthologia," he placed two lyres, the upper one inverted, and in the center a figure apparently intended to represent a Triton blowing his conch-shell. It is difficult sometimes to understand clearly the meaning of his emblematic tooling; when, however, his bill accompanies the book, he leaves no room for conjecture, but ascribes a meaning and significance to almost every line he has put upon it.

In his less elaborate work the predominating style is a delicate tracery of running vines and leaves, interspersed with numerous small dots, stars, and circlets of gold. This he calls "studded work." The result is peculiarly rich and effective. The backs are often covered with this style of decoration, the sides being left quite unadorned or with an ornament confined to the border, leaving the center blank. Inside joints are almost invariably found, often very wide and lavishly tooled and gilded, the outside of the book in these cases being treated very simply.

His most common style of binding is a richly tooled and gilded back, and a simple

line or two upon the sides, with occasionally the addition of a bit of his characteristic foliage tooling in the corners. He seldom finished a book in full doublure or with silk linings and fly-leaves in the style of Thouvenin and Bozérian, and there is no example, as far as the writer is aware, of his work in mosaic. Many of his bindings, especially in russia leather, are partly blind-tooled and partly gilt, with pleasing effect. Every impression of a tool, elaborate or simple, is undoubtedly the work of his own hands.

The end-papers used by Roger Payne have been more severely criticized than any other peculiarity in his binding. They are almost invariably of a plain color, without any pattern, and often purple, for which tint he appears to have had a remarkable fondness; and it must be admitted that these colors frequently form a disagreeable contrast to the tone of the outside cover, and have the further disadvantage of a tendency to become in time spotted and discolored. It is questionable, however, whether the plain, tinted papers were not

PLAUTI COMÆDIÆ.

ELZEVIR, 1652.

preferable to the marbled ones then obtainable and which he sometimes, though rarely, used, for they were, as a rule, both crude in color and poor in design. The figured and gilt lining-papers used by the French binders of the period, though very beautiful, would not have been in harmony with the character of his binding, and he never made use of them.

Many of his bindings are without any tooling whatever save a plain gold line around the edge; but, however simple the binding, it will invariably be found to be put together in an artistic and workmanlike manner. There appears to be little force in the criticism that his boards are too thin; they are thin and delicate, but they never warp, and keep their place, firmly secured to the back. What advantage, then, would be gained by having more weight and substance in them?

His extreme care in forwarding is well shown by the fine condition in which many of his bindings remain to the present time. Every leaf, as he tells us repeatedly in his

bills, was most firmly and securely stitched separately into the back, the silken headbands were strongly and neatly worked in, and the greatest care was exercised that the leaves should be placed squarely and true; in fact, it is doubtful if any binder ever attended with such painstaking care and minuteness to all the small details of his work.

In a copy of Tewrdannckh (folio, 1517), bound for Mr. Wodhull, a noted collector of the last century (for whom Roger Payne executed many bindings), is inserted a proof of the portrait engraved by Harding, shown in the frontispiece; a reduced copy of this print will also be found in Dibdin's "Decameron," Vol. II., page 510. The engraving of this portrait is remarkable evidence of the estimation in which Payne's work was held by the book-lovers of the day, when we remember that only one other engraved portrait of a bookbinder exists—that of Charles Lewis. Even of the greatest of the modern French binders, Trautz, there is only a process-plate print.

The binding of this copy of Tewrdannckh, which is quite simply ornamented, cost £8. As Payne's charges were most moderate, much of this amount must have been the cost of cleaning and repairing. In this part of his work he was assisted by a Mrs. Weir,[1] noted for her skill in cleaning and mending injured or decayed books. She is also said to have been a binder of books, somewhat in the style of Roger Payne's plain work. A copy of Albertis's "Opus praeclarum in Amoris Remedio," 1417, which came from the White Knights, Hibberts, Marquis of Blandford, and Syston Park collections, is said to be a specimen of her binding. It is in blue, straight-grained morocco, such as was often used by Payne, and has the same plain colored end-papers;

[1] Mrs. Weir repaired many of the books in the famous library of Count McCarthy at Toulouse, and the parchments, vellums, etc., in the Record Office in Edinburgh. Her chef-d'œuvre in the art of restoration is said to be a copy of the "Faite of Arms and Chivalrye," printed by Caxton, sold in the Roxburghe Sale. Her husband, Richard Weir, was taken by Payne as a partner in his later years; but as they were both afflicted with a too great fondness for the ale-cup, they soon quarreled and separated.

the only decoration on the side is a border line of gold, with the arms of the Marquis of Blandford in the center.

The closest imitator of Roger Payne's plain bindings was Kalthoeber; his elaborate tooling he never attempted to copy. The note of caution sounded so often in the catalogues of London booksellers, as to the danger of being deceived by imitations of Roger Payne's binding, is hardly warranted by the facts of the case. Any one who has become familiar with genuine examples of his work is in little danger of being deceived by an imitation, so distinctive and unmistakable is his style.

His bindings bear no signature. That practice had not yet been adopted in England, and only occasionally in France do we find the binders of the eighteenth century making use of a small printed slip ("etiquette"), with the name and address, inside the cover.

In place of a signature we have, however, many of his bills. They are full of quaintness and originality, and are verbose

to the last degree. The following is a copy of his bill for binding the "Æschylus" (Glasgow, 1795) for Lord Spencer, considered to be the finest example of his workmanship in existence.

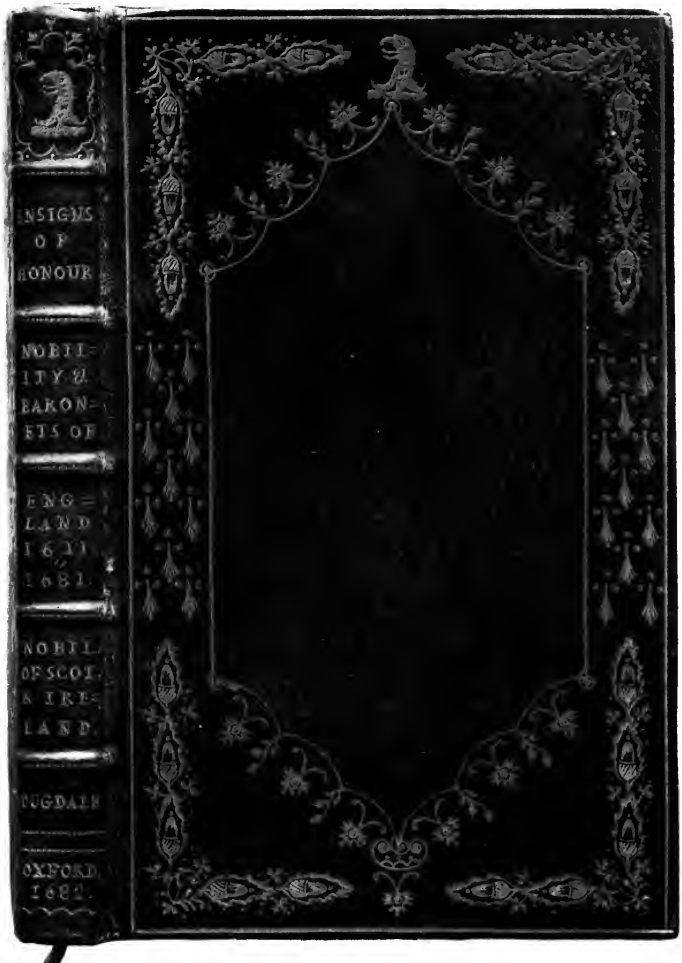
Æschylus, Glasguae MDCCXCV Flaxman Illustravit Bound in the very best manner sew'd with strong Silk, every Sheet around every Band, not false Bands, The Back lined with Russia leather, Cutt Exceeding Large. Finished in the Most Magnificent Manner Em-bordered with ERMINE Expressive of the High Rank of the Noble Patroness of The Designs The other Parts Finished in the most elegant Taste with small Tool Gold Borders Studded with Gold and small Tool Panes of the most Exact Work. Measured with The Compasses. It takes a great deal of Time making out the different Measurements; preparing the Tools; and making out New Patterns. The Back Finished in Compartments with parts of Gold studded Work and open Work to Relieve the Rich close studded Work. All the Tools except Studded points are obliged to be Workt off plain first — and afterwards the Gold laid on & Worked off again. And this Gold Work requires double Gold being on Rough Grain'd Morocco The Impressions of the Tools must be fitted & cover'd at the bottom with Gold to prevent flaws & cracks. £12. 12. 0

Fine Drawing Paper for Inlaying The Designs. 5s 6d Finest Pickt Lawn Paper for Interleaving The Designs. 1s 8d | 1 yd. & a half of Silk. 10s 6d Inlaying the Designs at 8d each—32 DESIGNS, £1. 1. 4.	1 19 —
Mr. Morton adding Borders to the Drawings.	1 16 —
	£16 7 —

The following bill is inserted in a copy of Heydon's "Harmony of the World" (London), 1662, bound for Dr. Mosely, and tooled in what Payne calls the "Rosie Crucian taste" and the "Druid taste," whatever they may be. For some reason this binding, although not an important specimen, appears to have been a noted one, and a copy of the bill is also given in Dibdin's "Decameron."

HARMONY
OF THE
WORLD
BY
HEYDON
LONDON
MDCLXII.

Bound in the very best Manner. The Book sew'd in the very best manner with white Silk very strong and will open easy, very neat & strong Boards. Fine Drawing paper inside staind to suit ye colour of ye Book. The outsides Finished in the Rosie Crucian Taste very correct measured Work. The Inside Finished in the Druid Taste with Acorns & S S (vide Stuckley's



ENSIGNS OF HONOUR.

WILLIAM DUGDALE, OXFORD, 1682.

ABURY). Studded with Stars &c in the most magnificent manner. So neat elegant & Strong as this Book is Bound. The Binding is well worth 13*s.* and The inlaying The frontispiece Cleaning & Mending is worth 2*s.* To (Dr. Mosely's) great goodness I am so much indebted that my Gratitude setts the price for the Binding inlaying Cleaning & Mending at only 10*s.* 6*d.*

1796. 18th August Rec'd the Contents by me.
ROGER PAYNE.

This bill bears his autograph signature, which is an unusual occurrence.

In one of his bills for binding "Recreations for Ingenious Head Pieces," sold in the Doctor's library in 1815, he indulges in the following bit of original verse, his own composition, laudatory of his beloved barley broth:

> But history gathers
> From aged forefathers
> That ales the true liquor of life
> Men liv'd long in health
> And preserved their wealth,
> Whilst Barley-Broth only was rife.

Most of the bindings in Dr. Mosely's library were probably executed by Payne in compensation for medical advice.

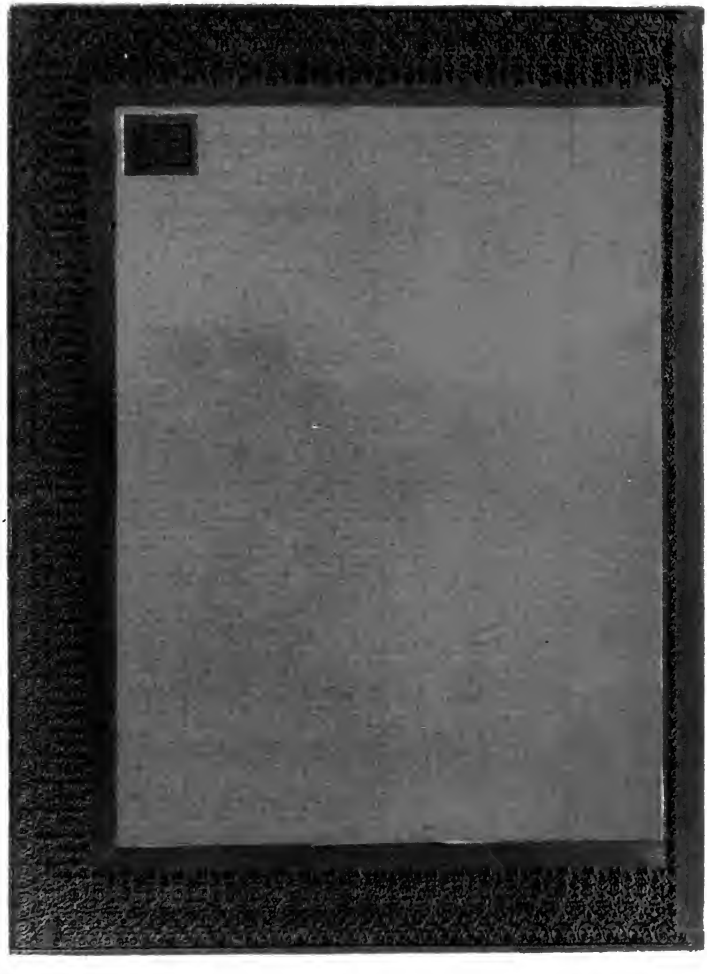
The following bill for binding "Sandys' Travels, MDCX," "Wheeler and Spon's Travels, MDCLXXV," is copied here as evidence of the exceeding care taken by Payne in repairing and forwarding (with the aid undoubtedly of Mrs. Weir) the books intrusted to him, some of which must have been in an all but hopeless state of dilapidation.

Bound in the very best Manner, sewed in the Best manner with Bands outside of ye Back, Fine Drawing Paper for flying Leaves at ye beg-yining and end of the Book. Fine dark Coloured Paper inside & Morocco Joints very neat.

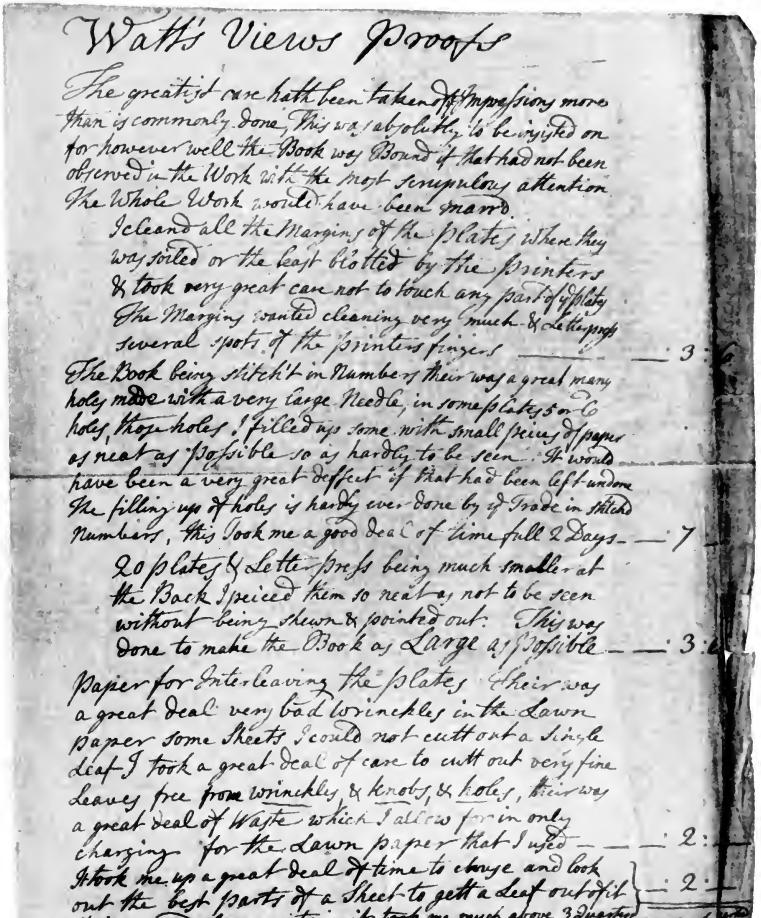
The Back coverd with Russia Leather before the outside cover was put on. N. B. The Common practise of Book-binders is to Line their Books with Brown or Cartridge Paper. the Paper Lining splits and parts from the Backs and will not last for Time and much reading. Bound in the finest Russia Leather of the same Colour as imported. Parts was staind wanted washing and cleaning, which I have taken particular care to do, to make the Books as fair and clean as I possibly could, it being a principal object to make it a fine copy. Their was a great many torn places, which I mended as neat as I possibly could of the same Colour'd paper as the Books. The Prints wanted new margins to all of

SEATS OF THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY.

W. WATTS, LONDON, 1779.



INSIDE COVER OF WATTS'S VIEWS.



Watt's Views Proofs

The greatest care hath been taken off Impressions more than is commonly done, This was absolutly to be insisted on for however well the Book was Bound if that had not been observed in the Work with the most scrupulous attention The Whole Work would have been marr'd.

I cleand all the Margins of the plates where they was soiled or the least blotted by the printers & took very great care not to touch any part of ye plates The Margins wanted cleaning very much & Letterpress several spots of the printers fingers — 3 :

The Book being stitch't in Numbers their was a great many holes made with a very large Needle, in some plates 5 or 6 holes, those holes I filled up some with small peices of paper as neat as possible so as hardly to be seen. It would have been a very great deffect if that had been left undone The filling up of holes is hardly ever done by ye Trade in stitch'd Numbers, this Took me a good deal of time full 2 Days — 7

20 plates & Letter press being much smaller at the Back I peiced them so neat as not to be seen without being shewn & pointed out. This was done to make the Book as Large as possible — 3 :

Paper for Interleaving the plates Their was a great deal very bad wrinckles in the Lawn paper some Sheets I could not cutt out a Single Leaf I took a great deal of care to cutt out very fine Leaves free from wrinckles, & knobs, & holes, their was a great deal of Waste which I allow for in only charging for the Lawn paper that I used — 2 :

It took me up a great deal of time to chuse and look out the best parts of a Sheet to gett a Leaf out of it that was good I am certain it took me much above 3 Quarters of a Days Work looking over & over again to gett good paper to putt into the Book — 2 :

BILL FOR BINDING WATTS'S VIEWS.

(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

Brought over — 18: —

mpassing The plates & Letter press to regulate
e Margins every one Single They being very
adly cutt up before they were Stitched for Sale
e Margins was vey iregular, this took me a great deal
time and was obliged to do it very carfully to have ye
argins True and so as to cutt the Book as Large as
ossible and I hope & beleive it is the Largest Copy
be found that is Bound for it is cutt very Large — 6:6

The Book sew'd with very strong Silk in the best
Manner, their is not any false Bands to this Book
The Back lined with Russia Leather, very
strong and neat Bands. Fine Drawing paper
Inside, and Morroco Joints inside.
Bound in the very best Manner, & the most
elegant Taste. highly Finished with
Gold Studded Borders inside magnificent
he outside Finished with two very elegant
old Borders magnificent. The Back richly
Finished with Gold Studded Work — 3: 3: —

£ 4:7:6

Rec.d on acct. — 14:6 — 0:14:6

Sept.r 27th 1793 Remains Due — £ 3:13:0

them except 2 or 3 for the old margins was ragd and staind. I have taken care to piece the margins very neat with paper of the same Colour and substance in the thickness or thiness of the various Prints as I *possobly* could, took a great deal of time. I hope I have been carful to put in the very best impressions. I have taken care not to beat or any ways injure the Prints. I have been conscientiously care-ful in all parts of ye Work. £1. 13. 0. Dec. 1st 1794. Recd the Contents.

Per ROGER PAYNE, Book-binder.

The reproduction opposite is a facsimile of a very beautiful specimen of his binding upon a large quarto volume, "Watts's Views of the Seats of the Nobility." A facsimile of his bill for the same is also given.

One of the singular pieces of good fortune that sometimes, although rarely, befall the collector of books is illustrated by an experience of the writer some years since.

A copy of the "Northumberland Household Book," bound by Roger Payne, was purchased at the Stourhead Library sale in 1883. No bill was noted in the catalogue as accompanying the book, but it

was a well-authenticated binding of Roger Payne, and the bill itself was printed in full in Clarke's "Repertorium Bibliographicum." Apparently the original bill had been lost. In 1888, five years afterward, the following note came from the London agent:

DEAR SIR,

One of the people at Sotheby's [the old and well known London auction house] found in a lot of waste paper the original Roger Paynes bill for binding the Northumberland book which I bought for you at the Stourhead Library Sale & feeling sure that you would like to put it into the book I gave him a reward for it (10 shillings), & now enclose it to you.

Thus, after five years of separation, during which this little slip of paper had been lying unnoticed on the dusty floor of a London auction-room, it and the book to which it belonged were safely brought together again.

THE EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND'S HOUSEHOLD BOOK.

LONDON, 1770.

BILL FOR BINDING THE NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSEHOLD BOOK.

— THE EARL OF NORTHUM-BERLAND'S — HOUSEHOLD — BOOK — BEGUN ANNO DOMINI MDXII — LONDON PRINTED MDCCLXX —

Bound in the very best Manner in Red Morocco.

No false Bands but Sew^{d} in the very best Manner on strong & neat Bands. The Back lined with Russia Leather under the Morocco Covering. Fine Drawing paper Colourd to suit the original Colour of the Book Inside for flying leaves and very neat Morocco Joints inside. The Outsides Finished in an elegant Antiq. Taste with Borders of 'S 'S & Laurel Branch an Antiq Shield & Crescent in ye Borders. The Crescent is used in the Head piece of ye preface which was my reason for using it in the Back & Borders being suitable to the Book. The greatest care hath be taken to preserve the margins.

Gilt leaves not Cutt. 2 leaves was very much staind at ye end of the Book we washed them very carfully and they are now very Clean.

£1. 1. 0

BILL FOR BINDING A COPY OF LILLY'S CHRISTIAN ASTROLOGY, NOW IN THE LIBRARY OF THE GROLIER CLUB.

CHRISTIAN ASTROLOGY BY LILLY.
LONDON. MDCLIX.

Bound in the very best manner, sewd in the very best and most honest manner on Bands, outside. The Book being very thick it required the greater care in sewing to make it easy and not fail.

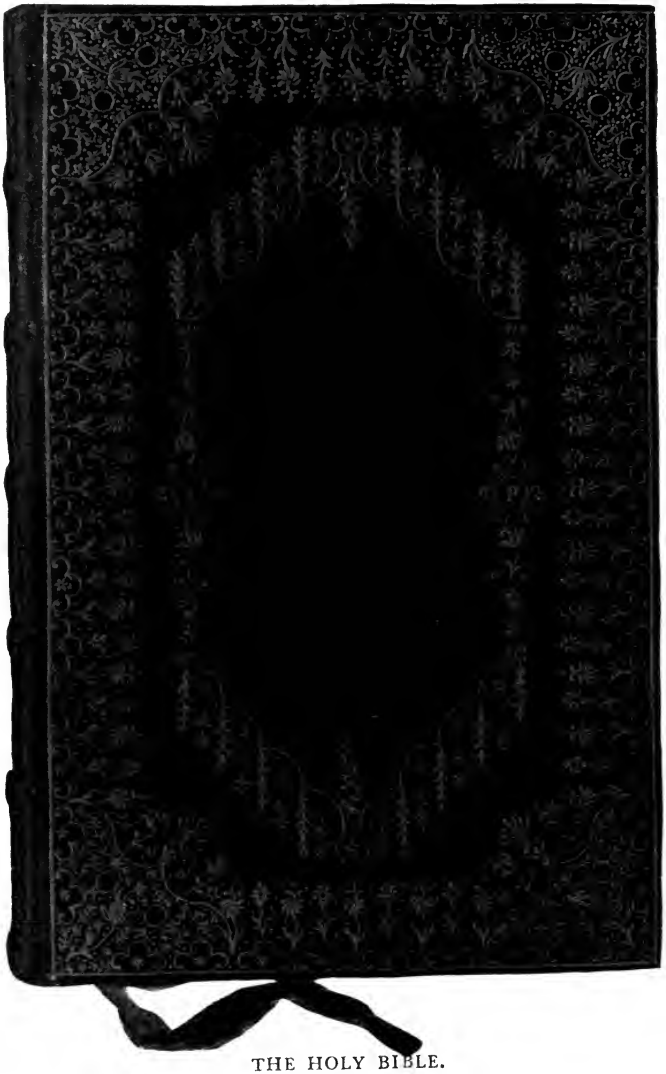
it is absolutely a very Extra Bound Book. I hope to be forgiven in saying so & unmatchable Velum Headbands. so as not to break like paper rold up Headbands.

The greatest care and method taken to make this Book as good a Copy as my hands and experience of Work was able to do the Binding in Russia Quarto. — 11 —

Washing & taking out the Writing Ink. Washed the Whole Book. — 6 — 6

Cleaning it was very dirty & I am certain took full 2 Days Work. The Frontispece was in a very indifferent Condition all the Writing Ink is taken out of it amended & several other places mended. The greatest care hath been taken of the Margins. Gilt. Leaves not Cutt. — 6 —

£1 .. 3 .. 6



THE HOLY BIBLE.

EDINBURGH, 1715.

One of the most beautiful bindings of Roger Payne is upon a copy of "The Holy Bible" printed at Edinburgh, 1715, now in the possession of a New-York collector. It has more than an ordinary interest from the fact of its having been specially bound for his friend Mr. Thomas Payne, and has his initials worked in the ornament on the side. This binding was copied for the cover of the first publication of the Grolier Club, "The Decree of Starre-Chamber," the letters G. C. being substituted for T. P. The original bill is inserted, in which the binder says: "The outsides finished in the richest and most elegant taste, richer and more exact than any book that I ever bound."

The charge for binding was £1 18 0; for mending and cleaning, £0 3 6; a total of £2 1 6.

Its present marketable value is easily forty times this sum.

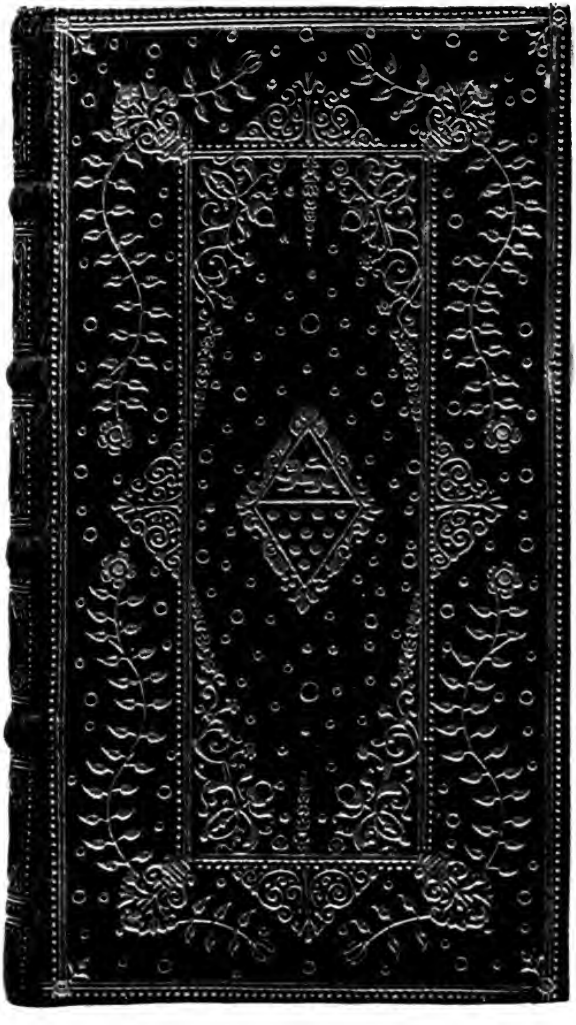
The patrons of Roger Payne numbered all the noted book-collectors of the last century. For Earl Spencer he bound many

books, notably his chef-d'œuvre, the "Æschylus," previously mentioned. The Beauclerc, Cracherode, and Stanley collections also contained fine specimens of his work, as did also that of Mr. Wodhull, the well-known classical scholar and collector. At the sale of the Wodhull library and that of the Duke of Hamilton, and at the Syston Park sale, all of which have occurred during the past eight years, the principal and almost the only opportunities have been afforded for this generation of collectors to secure specimens of Roger Payne's binding. No important source of supply apparently now remains excepting the improbable one of the library at Althorp (Lord Spencer's) coming upon the market.

Roger Payne died in a little room in Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane, London, on the 20th of November, 1797. In this brief sketch of his life and work it is not sought to prove that he excelled or even equaled in artistic sense or skilful execution the famous French and Italian binders of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The French book-collector covets no Roger Payne binding; neither, for that matter, is he much interested in any book that has not something Gallic in its construction. The catalogue of his library rings the changes on La Fontaine, Molière, and the remainder of the circumscribed list of great French authors, until the reiteration becomes wearisome. But to the English or the American collector the distinct and thoroughly Anglo-Saxon flavor of Roger Payne's work is peculiarly grateful and attractive; it is more in harmony with his Chippendale or Sheraton cabinet than the bindings of Le Gascon, Pasdeloup, or Duseuil, charming and beautiful as they are. An incidental advantage of a Roger Payne binding is, that it covers, as a rule, cleaner and more wholesome literature than that of his fellow-craftsmen across the Channel.

The annals of English binders preceding Roger Payne are few and meager. The Irish monk Dazius in the sixth century illuminated manuscripts and covered them with gorgeous bindings of gold,



PSALMS OF DAVID.

N. BRADY, LONDON, 1716.

more representative of the art of needlework than that of bookbinding.

William Caxton, the first English printer, and his immediate successors, Wynkyn de Worde, Pynson, and Machlinia, may be styled the printer-binders, the books which they printed being undoubtedly bound at the press before they were offered to the public for sale, probably by workmen brought from Germany, France, and Flanders.

Of all the English bindings that have come under the writer's observation, the one which represents a style by which Payne may have been influenced more than by any other is upon a little duodecimo volume of the "Psalmes of David," printed in 1716. It is ornamented with the same or similar trailing vines and leaves, and multitudinous dots and circlets, so much employed by Payne. Although akin to this beautiful creation of his nameless predecessor, Payne's work is never an imitation of it, but invariably bears the stamp of his own genius and individuality.

To many book-collectors of the present

day this estimate of the bibliopegic skill of Roger Payne may appear too highly colored. That the artistic quality of his work was fully recognized and his bindings greatly esteemed by the collectors of the last century (the formative period of the finest as well as the most extensive private libraries of England) we have the testimony of John Nichols, the "indefatigable editor" of the "Gentleman's Magazine," who wrote of him, shortly after his death, these words of unstinted praise: "He lived without a rival, and died, it is feared, without a successor."

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